



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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PLANNING DIVISION
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

STEP 1: DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE
STAFF REPORT

Site: 377 Washington Street

Case: HPC.DMO 2021.04

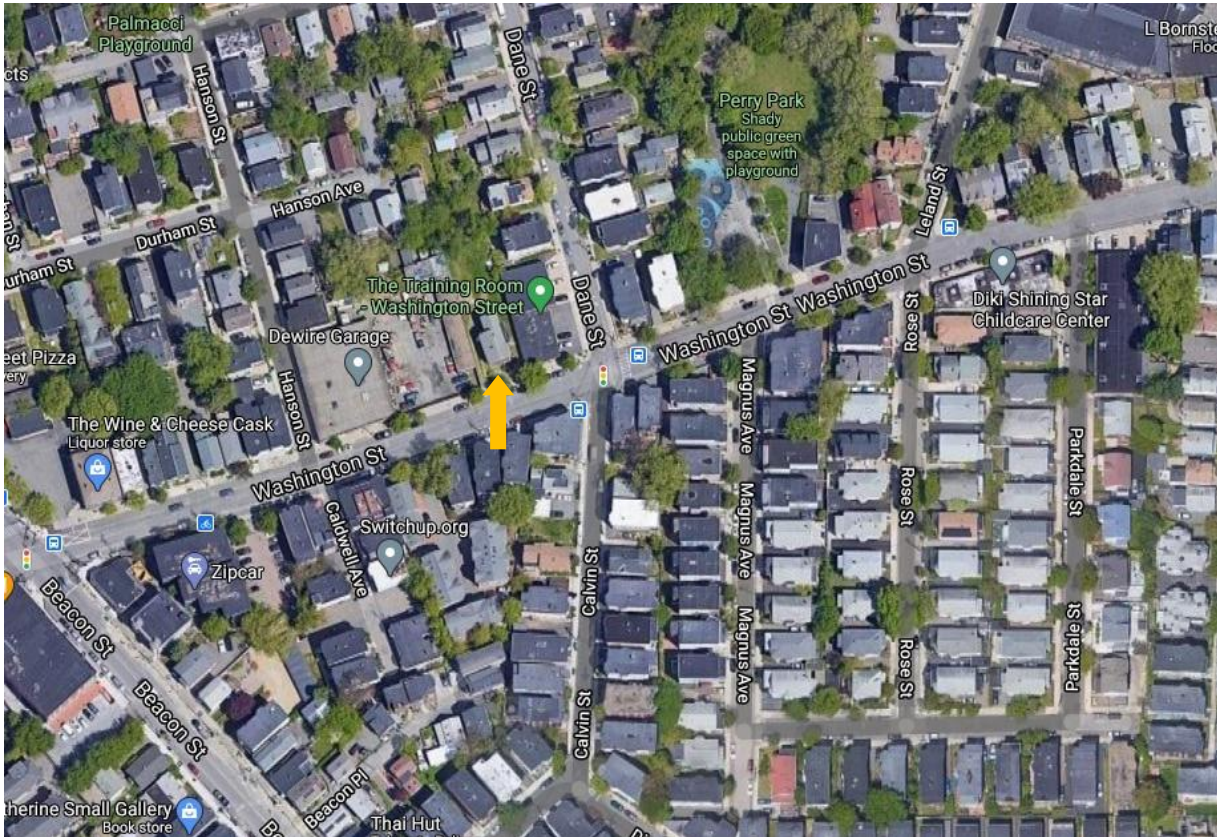
Applicant: Thomas Lichoulas

Owner: Washington TN, LLC

Proposal: *Demolish all structures*

HPC Meeting Date: February 16, 2021





I. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Historical Context: 377 Washington Street is sited between the cross streets of Dane Street and Hanson Street, two blocks from the intersection of Washington and Beacon, near the Cambridge city line.

The first time 377 Washington is noted on available maps is the 1874 Hopkins Plate E. At this time, the house is extant on a large tract of land owned by Jno. ("John") Leland. Though the 1874 map is the earliest map available, this doesn't mean that 377 Washington Street was built in 1874. It is quite possible that it was built as early as the 1860s as the Italianate style was popular and typical during that decade as well. There are two dwelling houses on Leland's tract of land at this time.

377 Washington Street shows a rectangular main massing, a right elevation jog and a smaller rear addition that is subservient to the main massing. The building is indicated on the 1874 map below:

Below: Portion of 1874 Hopkins plate E. 377 Washington Street indicated.



The 1874 Hopkins plate E shows the growing development in this part of Somerville. Yet, large tracks of land held by single individuals or families, such as those of Charles Durham, Edward Millis, and Hawkins, remained. In addition, many parcels of land had been platted, but not yet built upon. As with most other areas of Somerville at this time, speculative development was well under way.

According to the 1870 federal census, John Leland was a 50-year old head of household living with his wife, Sophronia, and who we presume to be his three children:

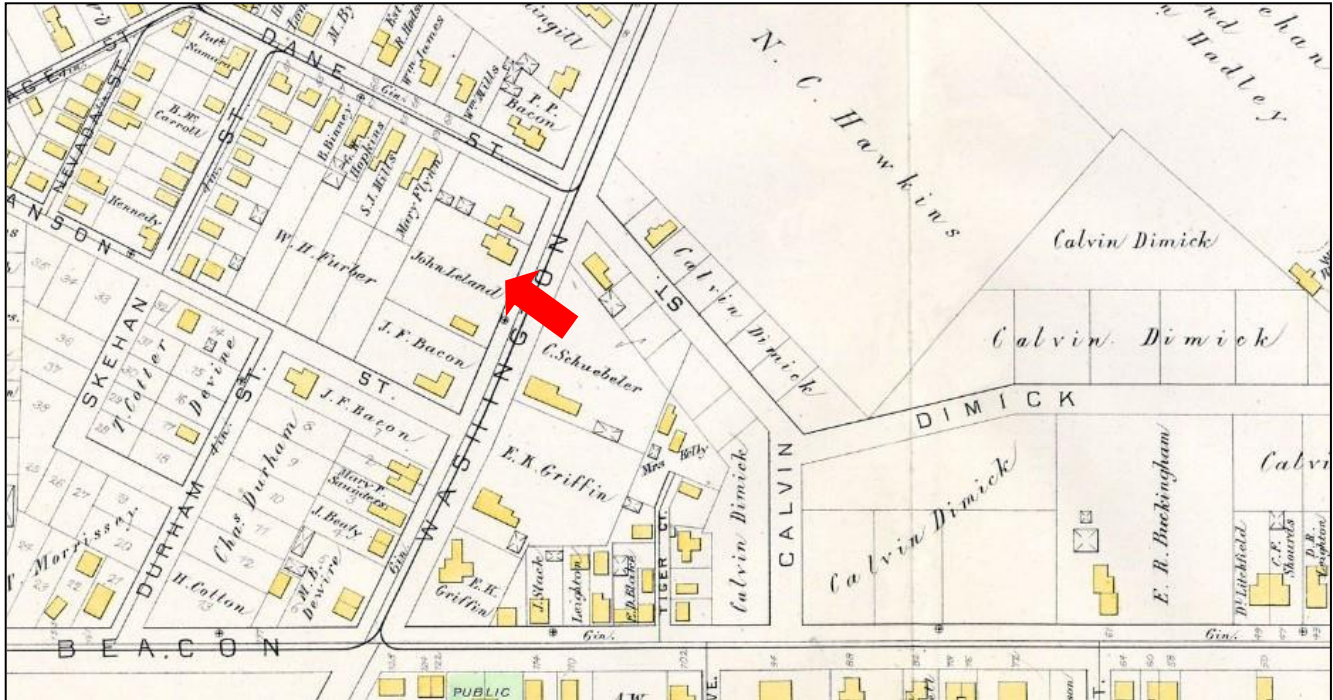
- Annie (22) – school teacher
- Olla (19) – school teacher
- Frank (17) - dry goods clerk

John's occupation is listed as a "wheelwright", a repairman of wooden wheels for carriages and wagons. An excerpt of his 1870 census entry appears below:

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|----|---|---|-----------------|--------|--------|
| Leland John | 50 | M | W | Wheelwright | \$4500 | \$3000 |
| — Sophronia | 47 | F | W | Keeping House | | |
| — Annie | 22 | F | W | School teacher | | ✓ |
| — Olla | 19 | F | W | School teacher | | ✓ |
| — Frank | 17 | M | W | Clerk Dry Goods | | ✓ |

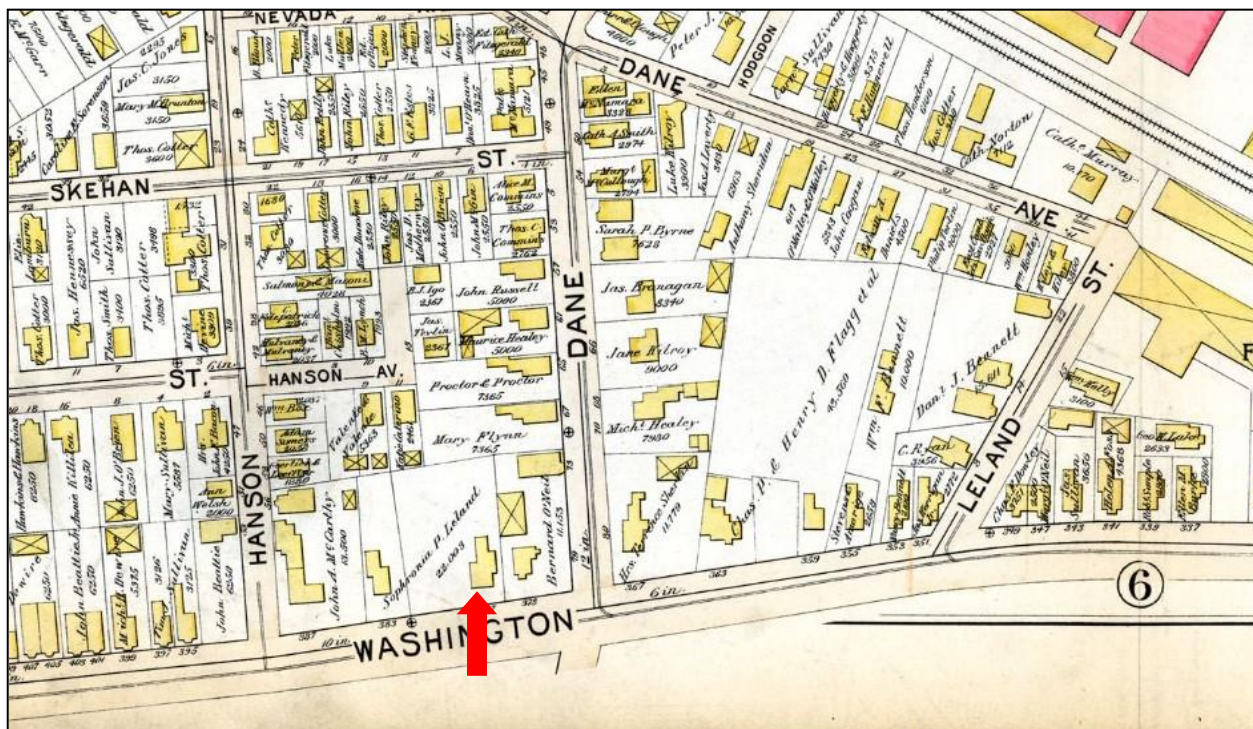
The 1884 Hopkins plate 8 shows that John Leland remains the owner of this same tract of land. Neither of the forms representing the residential structures show any addition or removal of building components.

Below: Portion of 1884 Hopkins plate 8. 377 Washington Street indicated.



The next available historic map, the 1895 Bromley plate 5 shows that John Leland's wife, Sophronia Leland, is now noted as the property owner. Ownership was likely transferred to her upon the death of John. By 1895, the original large tract of land has been subdivided into two parcels, both owned by his widow. 377 Washington Street receives the larger of the two new parcels. The house at 377 Washington retains its original shape.

Below: Portion of 1895 Bromley plate 5. 377 Washington Street indicated.



II. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Please see the section immediately below which discusses location, design, materials and any alterations as the same information would be written here, just in longer form.

The National Park Service identifies historic integrity as the ability of a property to convey significance. A property should possess sufficient integrity to convey, represent or contain the values and qualities for which it is judged significant; therefore, the following is an identification and evaluation of these qualities and alterations as they affect the ability of the subject property to convey significance.

The period of relevance for the house begins c 1874, but likely earlier.

- a. Location: The structure is in its original location.
- b. Design: Italianate. 2 ½-story with right elevation 2-story, flat-roofed jog; one story, subservient, gabled rear addition.
 - Gable-fronted, rectangular main massing with strong gable returns. Heavily dressed cornice around main massing, rear addition and right-side jog. Paired brackets with drops throughout cornice line. Paired brackets with drops under gable returns as well. Main massing is two bays wide and two bays deep.

Front façade

- First story: two-bays wide; right side entry hall with highly detailed period door surround and period ornamented door hood. Original side lights. Later door. Polygonal bay on left side of first story front façade. One-over-one double-hung window to the right of the bay.
- Second story: two bays wide, ne-over-one double-hung windows.

Right jog

- One bay wide, two bays deep. One-over-one double-hung windows throughout both stories.

Left elevation main massing

- Two bays deep. One-over-one double-hung windows throughout both stories.

Right elevation main massing

- No windows present.
- Two brick chimney stacks, one rising through main massing, the other through the rear addition.
- Modern brick front steps, low brick edging in front yard
- Exposed brick foundation

- c. Materials: Wood shingles throughout façade; wood trim, cornice, brackets, door, door hood, entry portico, sidelights and detailed door surround, window and bay trim; vinyl or aluminum windows; asphalt roof; brick foundation, steps, and edging; metal gutters and downspouts.
- d. Alterations: replacement windows, 20th-century brick front steps; later front door

Evaluation of Integrity: 377 Washington Street retains a high degree of integrity in terms of its original main massing, original rear addition and original right elevation jog. The building also retains a high degree of original architectural details including window trim, cornice, detailed brackets, door surround, side lites, door hood and other trims.

III. FINDINGS

For a Determination of Significance, the subject building must be found either (i) importantly associated with people, events or history and/or (ii) historically or architecturally significant. The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) must make these findings. The portions of the Demolition Review Ordinance (DRO) related to these findings are included below:

A. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

1. The HPC must make a finding as to whether or not the structure at 377 Washington Street meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the structure at 377 Washington Street does or does not meet the threshold for historic significance under finding “i”.

B. HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The findings for historical and/or architectural significance of a historic property address the period, style, method of building construction and association with a reputed architect or builder of the subject property, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures, and therefore it is in the public interest to be preserved or rehabilitated rather than to be demolished.

1. The HPC must make a finding as to whether or not the structure at 377 Washington Street meets any of the criteria stated above.

2. The HPC must specifically state why the structure at 377 Washington Street does or does not meet the threshold for historic significance under finding “ii”.

IV. VOTE

When bringing the matter to a vote, the HPC must include the reasons why the structure at 377 Washington Street is or is not “historically significant”.